



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

**OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER**  
**ROGER BERLINER**

July 12, 2010

Mr. Thomas Graham  
President  
Pepco Region  
701 Ninth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20068

Dear Mr. Graham

I am writing to you to express my concern regarding the recent and recurring power outages in Bethesda and the response of Pepco to these outages.

You may recall that I met with you and Joe Rigby, the Chairman of the Board of Pepco Holdings Inc, two years ago to share with you the frustration of both businesses and residents whose lives and livelihoods have been harmed by repeated, unexplained, and extended power outages in *fair* weather conditions. I have recently received numerous new complaints and I was called at home this weekend by one constituent who was caring for his dying sister in their home and their power had gone out three times in the past several weeks.

My constituents and I understand that during a storm, given the number of trees we have, outages can occur. What neither they nor I understand is why this area experiences so many outages that appear to be unrelated to wires downed by trees.

You should also be aware, if you are not, that the response of Pepco to these repeated outages has further infuriated my constituents. I am attaching just one e-mail correspondence that reflects their concerns ..... and mine. Homeowners without power get a pre-recorded message that is unsatisfying, often wrong, and apparently unconnected

100 MARYLAND AVENUE • ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850  
240/777-7828 • TTY 240/777-7914 • FAX 240/777-7989  
[Councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Councilmember.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

to the people who dispatch your crews. They are shown indecipherable maps on your web site as a means of communicating outage information.

This is not a good combination. Automated answering services are acceptable for a wide range of business activities. I, for one, do not believe that a power outage is one of them – except where the sheer volume of calls might dictate otherwise. A homeowner without power should be able to speak to someone; should be told (either then or when the information is available) what caused the outage, and how soon it will be taken care of. Losing power anytime is not a good thing; in this heat, losing power is far worse, and, I would hope, your company's response would reflect that reality.

Tom, you and I have worked collaboratively on a number of important projects, including your new "smart grid" that was to be rolled-out in Bethesda, and promises to help reduce both the number and length of outages. I would be pleased to collaborate with you on this issue – exploring new ways of meeting the legitimate needs of your customers and my constituents. If you think that a public forum would assist you in that regard, I would be more than happy to arrange one for the Bethesda community. In any event, I would appreciate hearing from you as to the causes of these repeated outages and how you plan on responding to customers experiencing outages going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Roger Berliner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roger" and last name "Berliner" clearly distinguishable.

Roger Berliner  
Councilmember, District 1